

They That Have Spoken

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## 1. Prologue

They That Have Spoken

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Installation 00 glowed with a vibrant intensity of light and energy, an instrument of war, destruction and ultimately salvation.

The dust swept away, as if for fear that the rumbling beast of a machine, driven by a Legend and its Light M41 AA gun, manned by yet another Legend, shooting the daylights out of its enemies.

As the rotting infected pursued the Warthog, explosions erupted from the very ground they stood on, melting and vaporising their already decaying biomass. Debris of fallen towers and mighty constructs that soared to the heavens had soon piled up as the newly rebuilt Installation 04 began to activate, along with its imminent destruction.

"We gotta jump now Chief!" the AI was desperate, she was not going to let this man fall, not after everything he has done. The Warthog soared through the air, crashing into the hanger bay of the Forward Unto Dawn. The Spartan and his Sangheili counterpart landed but were thrown off balance by the sheer force of the improvised landing.

Both of the warriors evaded from incoming obstacles, both clearly exhausted yet holding dearly to Hope. The Spartan transferred the Smart AI, Cortana, into the one of the network of the Dawn just as his comrade was nearly crushed by a 66 ton Scorpion tank. For a brief moment, Spartan-117 looked at the place where the Arbiter was trapped in out of concern, when the Sangheili made his way out a split second later they locked eyes and gave the other a nod. Their brotherhood

was sealed.

The Arbiter made his way further into the Dawn to seek shelter while never realising that his human brother was still trapped. His elation bought him a sense of relieve, clouding his better judgement of his surroundings until it was too late. When he looked back, only the darkness greeted him along with the closing air-locks. The happiness he briefly discovered was gone, replaced by trepidation, but he knew better, Spartans never die and he would await his return.

"Chief, if we don't make itâ€œ|" Cortana chimed. "We will make it." was his reply. "It's been an honour, \_John\_."

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The Dawn picked up its speed, trying to escape the impending destruction that was soon to be. John rested his head on the terminal he had clung on to in the hanger bay, his eye lids closing, accompanied by the sounds of the Dawn's thrusters, his fading heartbeat and the thoughts of home. The Dawn activated its Fujikawa Slipspace Drive and left the burning mega construct of Installation 04 in its dust.

In mere milliseconds after their departure, Installation 04 fired its destructive energy pulse which decimated any and all biomass in a 25000 light year radius, it was destroyed as well, it's force field generators were still too weak to support the sudden spike of energy from its miniature star that sustained it, causing it to collapse completely at the moment it fired. Like how it was, a hundred thousand years ago, Installation 00 was left in its midst of dust and radiation, albeit suffering from near catastrophic damage. With the blight of the Milky Way galaxy gone, the now dead Gravemind would consume, no more.

The energy pulse from Installation 04 was detected by an ancient sensor tower, as if awaking from its long hibernation, the ancient machine sent a message to the overseer of its local star system. The humming of an awakening planet loomed somewhere in the star system, there was no denying it, fate was set in motion. \_The fight has only just begun.\_

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"Chief!" Cortana spoke with alarm as the Spartan gave no response. "Chief!" she shouted once more in desperation. John groaned back as his eyelids struggled against the grinding headache he felt at the back of his head, she felt herself calming down after his response. In a soothing voice she inquired once more, "Chief. Can you hear me?" John struggled to recollect his senses, shortly after remembering what hell that have just gotten themselves out of. Giving a nod in response to her question, \_\*\*I thought I lost you, \*\*\_were the words unspoken. Knowing the hidden meaning of his simple gesture, she acknowledged his concern, "I thought I lost you too."

The warrior took a look at his surroundings, \_\*\*We made it through!- No, something's amissâ€œ|\*\*\_ His brief joy was shattered at the sudden realisation of the lack of gravity and the darkness that enveloped him. Instinctively, he activated the built in flashlights in his suit, illuminating the unnerving darkness. As he pushed against the wall to propel himself forward, his fingers impacted weakly against

the wall, showing his disappointment. Flipping himself upwards until he was facing what was behind him, he understood his predicament.

As the stars and dust stared back at him, radiating their immense power while the darkness shrouded at the edges of their display of power, his thoughts clouded his mind. \_\*\*Its spaceâ€| It's been such a long time since I appreciated its beauty. The last time was-\*\*\_ he stopped his line of thought, forcing himself not to recall the painful bits of his life.

Gathering his senses he asked "What happened?" "I'm not sureâ€|" Cortana accessed and began recalculation of the events again, "when Halo firedâ€| it shook itself into pieces. The portal couldn't sustain itself, we made it through just as it collapsed." she said with a hint of amusement. Cortana was quite certain luck was no mere figment of imagination, after all the possibility of them still being alive now was nil and yet, here they are, having seen through the beginning and the end of the human-covenant war and the end of the flood threat. Then her cheery mood dissipated, "well some of us made it", \_\*\* we were left behind\*\*\_. John nodded only so slightly, he understood now, the world had abandoned them and it dawned upon him how unfair his whole life had been towards him.

His surge of anger did not go amiss, Cortana had realised it from his expression before she picked up his rising heartbeats and the adrenaline that coursed through his veins. It has only been less than a few months since she was introduced to the Spartan, yet she began to comprehend how his mind worked, \_\*\*what was thisâ€| thing, humans addressed it as? Familiarity?\*\*\_ Returning back to calming him down, she quickly added "but \*\*you\*\* did it, Truth, the Covenant, the Flood, \*\*its finished\*\*â€|" ending her sentence with the sweetest smile she could offer. The light her AI avatar illuminated onto his helmet, he looked into the electric blue eyes of his companion that had remained with him through it all, "it's finishedâ€|" Accepting the truth was painful, John's throat felt constricted as a spike of adrenaline passed through, but he was a Spartan, he nodded away the tears that were beginning to cloud his vision. As he began to swim his way to a cryotube, his thoughts hounded him, \_\*\*the fight is over, humanity and her allies are safe and yet here I am, unable to experience the joys I could have, I always wondered what it is like to have kids, but fate just had to torment me further.\*\*\_ As he reached closer to his destination, he heard the same tune whenever he felt all hope is lost, \_\*\*The Song of the Stars\*\*\_, the chorus of the heavens set alight his hopes once more. Placing his assault rifle into the nearby weapons holder, Cortana added, "I'll drop a beacon, but it will be awhile before anyone finds usâ€|" the rhythm of the stars became stronger and John smiled. "years evenâ€|" he already accepted his fate, peace was all that was on his mind.

Cortana was unsure if she could her Spartan if the day of salvation comes for him, she knew her own lifespan, it would only be a few more months before she reached rampancy, the immense data of the original installation 04 Halo and the torture the Gravemind subjected her to had severely eaten the majority of her seven year life span. She felt an overwhelming sense of loss amongst the chaos of her clashing emotions, so she lowered her avatar's head, not knowing how John would react, "I will miss you." John had already closed his eyes, lying on the bed of the cryotube, the Song of the Stars were immensely strong now, "Wake me, when you need me." \_\*\*This is my fate.\*\*\_

Cortana never felt so hopeless before, despair clawed at her, she did not know what to do, her Spartan, her best friend, her everything that she has left, would be gone. All because she was sure she would reach rampancy before any help could reach them, hell, she was clueless as to which desolate part of the milky way they had been stranded on. But the worse was that she could no longer achieve the dreams she had. By far, she was the most technologically advanced creation of the UNSC, she was capable of dreams, of visions she wants to accomplish and now, her gift remains to haunt her. John has accepted his fate of never becoming a normal human being, she would never have the chance to enjoy existence together with him and she was certain she would fail in sending the Spartan back to the home he had saved.

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Fate is a strange thing; many believe that there are many different variations of fate, depending on our course of actions and others believe that there are variables and constants in fate, yet fate is the fixed event at that particular point in time due to our course of action and would change again when we have done something differently than our predicted fate, so it changes and another fate is predicted at another particular point in time.

Yet the fate of the Spartan and his companion were to be extinguished and their existence to perish, were it not for the actions of another.

The beacon Cortana had released sent a weak signal transmission of distress, picked up by an ancient machine that was left hidden within the star system the Spartan and his companion were in. The luck of John-117 had known no bounds.

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A/N:

Well hope you enjoyed it, it was a pleasure to finally write out what I have always held in mind since I finshed Halo 3, do send me your thoughts on this, I look forward to hearing from all of you, so thanks and see you again for the next chapter.

## 2. Chapter 1: The Tides Of Change

Chapter 1:The Tides of Change\_

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The change of fate did not go amiss, the Milky Way galaxy was doomed to be annihilated of all sentient life other than the Flood overlords. As the mighty explosion of energy shockwaves vibrated through a part of the Galaxy, those who were unaffected either felt or observed the beautiful synergy of power and majesty of the ancient Forerunners; and as if they understood, they revered it, knowing that somehow, their continued existence and the existence of their descendants were ensured.

The stars rang out a peaceful lullaby, one that was heard only by a

select few. When Sergeant Avery Johnson lay on the cold floor of Installation 04 with death drawing closer, his mind felt peace as he grasped at the memories he held so dearly. Every Saturday, his Ma would make chicken pie that had a terrible taste, but he would give anything just so he could bask in the tenderness of his mother when she passed away. His Pa would always try his best to be his ever watching guardian, he missed those times when he would undergo one of the worst times in his life and Pa would always be at the staircase of their humble apartment, always knowing where he would be to comfort him and give him advise he already known but nonetheless appreciated.

"Send me out, with a bang." \_\*\*I want this, go. Get out of here, make sure you live well kid, you deserve it.\*\*\_

Upon witnessing the Chief escaping the control room, he sighed and closed his eyes. He felt so cold until he thought of her. Her naivety and stubbornness was something he had come to rely on for hope. The way she smiled made his old heart flutter like a teenage boy. Suddenly, he felt warmth; the sounds of the self-imploding Installation was drown out by a peaceful tune he had never heard before. Ironically, he had never felt so alive as he listened intently to the Song of the Stars, with one last breath, he whispered, "Miranda!"

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It was late at night. Lord Terrance Hood had not slept since the reappearance of the Master Chief and the eventual Flood invasion. In all his years he had never felt as lethargic as he did now. After much persuasion from his AI assistant, he finally decided he would relent for now. His bones ached from old age and the stress he endured, he sat on a chair and used its support to twist his back until he felt a most satisfying crack. "Ah! Omph! That felt good." Letting his thoughts slip through his tongue. Taking another look at his surroundings, he realised he had never been back home for too long and it felt alien to him to actually relax in such an excruciatingly long time. The warm atmosphere of the house made him picture an 18th century British brick house with extended arms running towards him with blue annotations of 'Welcome Home!'

In a very long time, he smiled, genuinely. He now remembered where he got his childish impression from, it was an advertisement that had fascinated him as a child back when any of the Wars had not started and everything was peaceful, mostly. The tired Admiral looked at himself in a virtual mirror that was produced from a hologram projector from his clothing wardrobe. Wrinkles plagued his face and the evident signs of stress and lack of sleep had taken a toll on the once handsome Admiral. As he stared at himself, an idea crossed his mind. "Hey there gramps, you must be lost, let me go get good old Harley May to cheer you up!" he continued to amuse himself by imitating his favourite childhood cartoon characters. \_\*\*I guess the war must have hit me harder than I thought. Hah!\*\*\_

Lord Hood slowly made his way to bed and he laid there for what seemed like hours. He tried closing his eyes, flipping from side to side and to no avail, his heart was pounding faster as he heard gunshots and plasma discharge. His own voice yelled within his mind, as he remembered the tragedies he had witnessed. Multiple screams seemed to fill his mind, causing him to cringe on his own bed,

leaving him sweating profusely as he remised how the Flood had infected the people he had promised safety to. Man, woman and child, their bodies violated by the despicable parasite, their faces scarred and rotting, but still recognisable. Civilian families devoured by their own infected members and their cries of betrayal and agony rang loudly in his mind as they were murdered by their own. He cringed again as all of the sudden, the smell of putrid flesh entered his senses, as he envisioned- no remembered burning carcasses of people that littered the streets. He had witnessed the Brutes eating his soldiers while they begged for mercy or remained fiercely resilient. One by one, their limbs were viciously ripped apart, until a pathetic heap of their victims' remaining body were left, in some cases they were still alive until they succumbed to death with their eyes opened, as they were gorged upon again.

The memories haunted him, guilt festered deeper into his soul and he hated himself for not preventing their deaths. He was troubled and now he wondered, why was it that he, of all people, was chosen to lead and protect Humanity's true and last home. As he laid on his bed he forced opened his eyes and stared blankly at the ceiling, the voices always seemed to die down whenever he did this. After a while, he heard a strange and yet comforting tune. His eyes darted to and fro, searching relentlessly to find the source of the music. The tune calmed him, soothing his aching soul and imbued him a renewed vigour. The tune left him smiling and he was convinced that he was indeed going insane, because he figured that the tune resonated from the stars.

The next morning, he was rudely awakened when his AI assistant, Kroniid, informed him urgently. "Admiral, your attention is needed right now! The frigate, Forward Unto Dawn has appeared through the Ark's portal, visual analysis dictates that the Frigate has suffered tremendous hull damage, only an estimated 68% of the Frigate remains intact. Its air-brakes are unresponsive and the frigate is crashing as we speak."

"Get emergency response teams ready to cushion its fall. I don't want it crashing onto us and I want any survivors inside abstracted." Lord Hood responded. Kroniid nodded, "Already done Admiral. However fall damage the Frigate would receive could only be reduced by 33.769%. Furthermore, thermal sensors indicate that the interior temperatures of the Frigate has reached up till 350.15 kelvins, there will not be many survivors. Provided that the Flood has not already contaminated the Frigate, if not, protocol dictates that the survivors be quarantined or subjected to termination as of immediately and their bodies disposed by incineration."

The Admiral clenched his teeth, eyes burning through the walls of his house for he dared not hope.

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The clouds were marred by the smokes of the burning wreck of the Forward Unto Dawn, a sense of foreboding plagued the hearts of those that observed it crashing down into the scarred earth of which the Ark's portal was surrounded by. The image of peace seemed to be only a mirage in these lands, where battles were fought and blood was spilt. As UNSC engineers pried open the metal hull of the destroyed Frigate, a lone figure emerged. Shrouded by smoke, the figure emerged like a warrior hell-bent on vengeance, his reptilian eyes had stroke

terror into the hearts of the engineers that had managed to save him. He walked out of the searing heat of the wrecked Frigate, leaving its charred remains behind and the awe-struck engineers that stared at his figure as he ventured forward. From the engulfing flames that were produced from the burning remains of the Forward Unto Dawn, the Arbiter emerged, triumphant, but his eyes signalled an air of defeat.

Upon arriving by the side of the waiting Admiral, he stared blankly into the human's eyes. \*\*My brother was left behind.\*\* The Arbiter had no need to explain anything, his blank and weary eyes allowed the Admiral to comprehend immediately. The war was over, peace had been achieved, victory was ensured, but it had to dawn in fire for that to happen. The lives of men, women and Sangheili alike were sacrificed to allow the rest of the Milky Way Galaxy its continued existence. As Thel 'Vadam walked away to re-join his own kin that were waiting silently for him in a distance, he looked behind once more and placed his hand over his chest and nodded solemnly, respecting the dead that now lie far beyond in the Galaxy.

As the evening approached, the Arbiter was informed by Kroniid that he was invited to attend a ceremony to honour the dead. His blood boiled, screaming for vengeance as his mind accused them of betrayal. \*\*How could they have so little faith in the one that has never failed to prevent their impending demise? By the ancients! How DARE they insinuate that my BROTHER has ceased to exist. Were they not the ones that held so tightly to the belief that Spartans never die? Abhorrent, dishonourable fools!\*\* Sensing his internal turmoil, the Special Operations Leader, Rtas 'Vadum, went by his Arbiter's side.

"Brother, let not those impudent humans control your mind, we must remain clear in our hearts if we are to achieve peace. If they lack in honour, then be reminded that these humans are complicated beings. They show great honour and valour when the time is nigh for them to do so. They respect the Spartan in their own manner and we should honour their ways of mourning but we need not forget our own ways of doing so." Rtas said. The Arbiter now held firmer control of his emotions and nodded.

"You truly believe that the Spartan will return?" Rtas questioned once more. "Yes, indeed I do brother." Thel replied with conviction. Heaving a sigh, Rtas said once more before leaving the Arbiter to ponder alone, "Then I will provide any assistance I can, Arbiter. I trust your judgement, but let not your emotions control your mind, we must remain faithful to our cause, but it would be unwise if we were to become ignorant."

Approaching the console panel of the Shadow of Intent, the Arbiter sent a message in reply to Kroniid. Adjusting his posture to one that made him revered in the eyes of his brethren, he said, "Tell your leaders, I am coming."

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The sunset in the distance provided the last moments of warmth before the world seemed to plunge into the cold, cruel darkness. The sun's light slowly receded as darkness seemed all too eager to engulf the land once more. The last remaining rays of light were what gave some hope that a new day would come, but an impeding darkness had to be

conquered and thus, the light they now received would remain brightly in their hearts and souls, proving the warmth, comfort and hope they need to continue. Until dawn emerges.

It seemed fitting, that the Forward Unto Dawn was the Frigate sent by the UNSC in a last ditch attempt that was borne from the burning hope that Humanity had always held tightly onto. With the death of Truth, the Human-Covenant War was no more. The eradication of the Gravemind and its legion of flood armies had meant that the Milky Way Galaxy was now safe again, from the parasite's wrath. As they stood, the guards of honour, the Arbiter and the Admiral basked in the warmth of the receding sunlight. In front of them all was a piece of the Forward Unto Dawn, left mostly untouched. Plastered onto it were numerous photos of the deceased, Miranda Keyes, Sergeant Avery Johnson and so on, and so forth.

As they stood silently at the monument, their eyes were captivated by the inscribed number on it, 117. There were no photos that could be used to present the hero that had done the most for humanity as they remained heavily classified, there was no mementoes or personal belongings that could bring forth memories of the legend that had fallen. There was nothing to help future generations of Humanity's children to remember the hero, the warrior, the legend, the soldier and above all, the Spartan. But there was no need to, for he would be remembered by the stories that will foretell his adventures, he would be remembered by Humanity's continued existence for he had personally ended so many dangers it had faced. But above all, he would be remembered, not as the child that was abruptly separated from his family and forcefully adopted by the UNSC, but as the Spartan that had undergone countless trials and tribulations, entering a life of insurmountable dangers and had spat in the face of death multiple times. John-117 was remembered as the man who had been feared as the Demon by his foes and the salvation of his allies, he was remembered as a hero who had sacrificed all to do his duty.

When the time was nigh, they stood at attention, heads held up in pride, for they know the deaths of these fallen heroes had not gone in vain and they were proud because it reminded them of the resilience of Humanity. As they witnessed Admiral Hood taking off his military cap as a sign of respect they knew it was time.

"For us, the war is over. But let us never forget of those that travelled into the howling dark and never returned." He looked up with pride and inspiration. "For their decision required courage beyond measure. Sacrifice and conviction had convinced us that their fightâ€|" \_\*\*no \*\*\_"â€|our fight was \_elsewhere\_." He gave pause and listened to the whistling winds, surprisingly, the smell of burnt metal and rock was no more. \_\*\*Peaceâ€|\*\*\_

"As we start to rebuilt, this hillside will remain barren, a memorial to heroes fallen. They ennable all of usâ€| and they shall not be forgotten."\_\* Their legends will be sung, for millennia to come.\_\*

The Admiral put his cap back on, ready to proceed with the final rites of their heroes and gave a salute. "Present arms!" the drill master yelled. In perfect synchronisation, the guards of honour took their battle rifles and fired a single shot into the sky above. The voices of the shots that honoured the fallen echoed far and wide into the tundra, signalling an end of things, with memories never to be

forgotten.

With the closing of the ceremony, the Arbiter walked towards the Admiral. With each footstep, the echoes of the gunshots ran louder in his head and with it came clearer understanding of the Humans. He began to forgive them for their transgression of giving up on his Spartan brother, now realising that the humans had always understood that Spartans die, but they honour their sacrifice by letting their spirits live on in their hearts. In a strange sort of sense, Spartans never truly died. As he approached the Admiral, an odd sense of understanding had come across the two, once foes now turned allies. But they never forget, how could they?

"I remember how this war started." the Admiral spat. "What your kind did to ours." The venom in his voice increased in potency. The Arbiter remained in silence as guilt had sealed his jaws shut. But in a strange turn of events the Admiral's face gone softer and so did his tone, " I can't forgive you, but you have my thanks." As he said that, he turned to look into the eyes of the Sangheili warrior, hand outstretching. Thel 'Vadam knew the meaning behind the gesture and he was honoured that at some point, he had gained the leader of the human's respect. He reciprocated the action, knowing that the winds of change will be coming again after today and perhaps someday, the scars of war would be mended and the two races would remain strongly united until the end times. "For standing by him until the endâ€! Hard to believe he's dead."

The Arbiter's respect of the human before him had grown, but his own heart had questions unanswered, a memory had flashed past him when he thought of the time they met each other again on Earth. His words at that time may have held hostile intentions, but it bore many meanings. Thus, he said the same words he had to his Spartan brother in what seemed to be a lifetime ago. Its words the same, but the meaning had changed.

"Were it so easy..."

The clouds broke apart as the magnificent Covenant Super Carrier, Shadow of Intent, descended from the heavens. The Arbiter walked away, from the sun's receding rays, into the shade the carrier had provided. Lord Hood stared into the back of Thel 'Vandum, before his thoughts drifted elsewhere.\_\*\* Maybe forgiveness may not be so hard after all.\_\*\*

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The darkness that shrouded the other half of the Earth approaches pervasively as the sun's life giving light receded. Dusk has ended, the night approaches and with it comes an ancient observer, shrouded in the shadows of the Sol System. It has only approached the glistening blue planet when its masters called for it every millennia, but this time, its masters demanded for more information when a piece of a Human Frigate approached their doorstep. Multiple scans were issued by the observer, collecting information while Humanity remained oblivious. The AI piloting the observer felt proud of his creators when their judgement was proven correct again, the Humans as predicted, had ended the Flood threat and life in the Milky Way had not ended like it once did. However, his creators had also foretold that Humanity would not change, their ways of life would always lead to war, their destiny was paved with blood and fire. For

that reason alone, his creators had ended Humanity before, the ancient Humans proved to be a worthy foe, but it was too late when his creators did not learn the threat of the Flood from the Humans.

Through his eyes, the overseer of a distant star system saw it all. The Humans and their Sangheili brethren had accomplished what they could not, but a question lingers in his mind. He was unsure of what he was to do about the lone human that was drifting in his courtyard. The AI that accompanied him was oblivious to their presence and he was certain that this was the same defiant AI that had stolen the key of Installation 04 from Guilty Spark 343. However, he was interrupted from his thoughts when the observer he had sent out had discovered an anomaly in his readings. This had never happened before, their technologies were too sophisticated for any current beings in the Galaxy to rival and of this he was sure. But repeated scans had led to the same results, he was curious, could Humanity have been able to rival their technology so quickly? Were it not for the use of sight, an area of the Earth would have been invisible, as if that portion of land and sea was non-existent. The overseer was intrigued by this discovery as he continued to watch closely as his observer followed protocol to issue more powerful scans.

What the overseer uncovered next was spectacular, the Human faction, the UNSC, was no longer the dominant faction Humanity had. The Human population of the UNSC now accounted to less than 0.23077 percentage of the total Human population of Earth. There were 13 billion people living hidden within a secluded area where the Humans referred to as Asia, he was indeed captivated as to what was about to happen next.

Turning his attention to the floating debris that had intruded his home, he muttered in his own language, "Now human, what am I to do with you?"

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End

A/N: Hey guys! Do tell me if this chapter has been too short because personally, I felt that it was. Anyway, it's been a pleasure writing again, when I had received my first two reviews and follows I was bouncing with elation. The feeling is a glorious one and I do hope that I would get even more encouragement. Nevertheless it was fun writing and I long to hear from you guys how this chapter fared. I was aiming for a mesmeric/captivating/philosophical style. Do tell me if the story managed to give you 'vibes' when you read it. Well see you all again in the next chapter.

P.S: If you managed to figure out where I got the name "Kroniid" from, I applaud you.

### 3. Chapter 2: Revelations and Prophecies

#### Chapter 2: Revelations and Prophecies

A/N: I do not own Halo, Bungie or 343 industries, same applies to most authors, if not all in the fanfiction domain.

Take note that this is an Alternate Universe story of Halo, it was what my imagination had cooked up in the past and has been residing in me ever since.

Also much thanks to those that have deemed it worthy to review, favourite or follow this fic, really thanks, it means a lot.

In this chapter we would delve deeper into the background of this mysterious Human faction. Also my apologies for taking a long time to update, I have difficulties in finding time to write so I hope I have not disappointed you.

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This was an interesting situationâ€| Never had he, \_Esteemed Overseer of the Artificial Shield World Elegance\_, thought that he would encounter a child of his creator's enemies. His curiosity had snatched control of his own mind, ignoring \_standard protocol\_ to eliminate the offending scrap of metal, \_together\_ with its inhabitants he was so fixated in. \*\*Curse the Creators and their incognitve minds when they rashly programmed me with thisâ€| infuriating concept of \*\*\_\*curiosity\*\*\_\*! \*\*However the ancient construct berated himself though, he felt a tinge of gratitude. Were it not for the sudden appearance of the scrap heap that found its way into his star system, he would have to wait another tormenting 867.591 nearest star cycles before he could reawaken for a short while before being subjected to a hated hibernation again.

He had come to realise that his entire existence has been \_miserableâ€| Sighing inwardly, he surprised himself once more, never had he known that he could do that! After a few awkward moments of analysing his systems for errors and finding none, he snapped out of his self-loathing reverie and returned to the task at hand. The Overseer knew that it would be a matter of time before another construct would discover what he had, during those times, he felt conflicted. Protocol had \_clearly\_ dictated that he removed the drifting pile of metal along with its inhabitants with extreme prejudice. Furthermore, the Shield World, Elegance, was to remain hidden at all costs, even if the Human construct and the human itself had not come to realise their presence, they had drifted uncomfortably close to Elegance's long range scanners. Fortunately, they were located extremely close to a primitive planet, Requiem, whose magnetic fields had interfered with the long range signature scanners of Elegance, thus, he was the only one that has known of the Human's and the accompanying construct's unclear existence at the moment.

He toyed with the idea of using the two unfortunate entities for his extremely short entertainment before allowing protocol to handle them afterwards, but his loyalties and commitment to his creators restrained him from doing so. He contemplated between obeying and disobeying protocol. \*\*Never had an incident such as this occurred before and it might never occur again! B-But what if the \*\*\_\*Overlord\*\*\_\* finds outâ€| No! What more torment can his wrath unleash? I have suffered worse; such an opportunity can never present itself like that again, b-b-but what of my loyalties to my beloved creators! Surely they would look down with disdain! \*\*The myriad of conflicting emotions and reasoning waged a war in his mind, bringing upon him distress he had not experienced in a long time. Finally he

gathered the courage to do what he knew, must be done. Cringing inwardly, he cursed his own fears and what was causing them. \*\*I suppose my beloved creators can fornicate themselves! I must have MY happiness!\*\*

It had seemed that his creators heard him, especially the very last thought he had before. The Overseer was rudely interrupted by the most detestable blare in his communications link by no other than his only superior in his local star-system, just in time before he was to proceed with his rash decisions. The Overseer had an overall conflicting feeling as his guilt, fear and anger circuits in his emotion core bombarded his neuro-processors, he cringed again, not knowing what was to happen next shook him. The Overseer contemplated his choice of words before answering his superior's call, not wanting to sound suspicious he answered, "Overlord Kinesis, what is it that you require of your Overseer?"

"One would refrain from lying now, Overseer Serenade. After all, were you not aware that as Overlord of this Shield World, I know all of what our fellow constructs installed here by our creators know. Overseer, did you truly not realise the folly of your disobedience?" Kinesis spat with venom.

Sighing in defeat, Overseer Serenade replied, "Indeed, I realise my transgression now Overlord, any punishment you deem necessary to correct my behavioural patterns would be accepted." Serenade's fear circuits were overloading in his emotion core at that very moment before he was pleasantly surprised.

"Fret not Overseer, although standard protocol would dictate necessary action against dissidents, the human and its construct, the creators had gifted us once more before they had last left this World. Overseer Serenade, although your actions were unacceptable, they wereâ€|expected. A construct such as yourself were the few that were blessed with something the creators given only very rarely, your ability to defy protocol and take charge of actions around you as you deemed fit while remaining relatively unblemished by rampancy was no mistake. In simpler terms, the creators intended for this fateful time to occur." Spoke the Overlord.

The ancient construct could not have been happier for his entire existence, hearing those words were simply a bliss. \*\*Oh bless the creators!\*\* He thought to himself as he was overflowing with jubilant ecstasy, before a realisation hit him. "That may be so Overlord Kinesis, but why, this construct asks, did you try to apprehend me moments ago if you had already known what was to be?"

In response to his question, the holographic avatar of the Overlord appeared before him. Standing in what seems to be an advanced combat harness gear available only for the highest ranking of commanders; Kinesis stood tall, proud and his image simply projected 'Elegance', fitting for the Overlord of Shield World Elegance. His holographic face radiated with an air of supremacy but the constant smirk he carried made him more feared than respected, but of course Serenade knew better. The Overlord's holographic form also showed the thin and tall body structures his creators possessed. The Overlord smirked than he already did before replying, "I was bored Overseer Serenade, surely such a trivial matter would not bring you to feel insulted, now would it Overseer?" Overlord Kinesis disappeared leaving a disgruntled Overseer to curse silently. \*\*By the Creators! I DESPISE

that construct with a passion like no other!\*\*

Thinking back to what he had intended to do, Overseer Serenade gleefully rubbed his holographic hands together, grinning in mischief and he sent for an extraction team immediately. The Spartan's luck was simply outrageous.

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The AI roamed about the dying remains of the torn half of the Forward Unto Dawn's network. She diligently ciphered through the mere 143.9 tetrabytes of remaining information left on the floating metal debris, going from alphabetical order from top to bottom and then back to the top. This was the eighteenth time she has done so in the past 42 hours and her boredom was literally, driving her closer to rampancy.

The troubled AI sighed inwardly and returned to study the last remaining person on the ship. After a few moments, she turned away as she found out that perhaps the most thrilling parts of her short lifespan has come to an end. When she thought back upon the time when the Chief had mumbled "the song of the stars" before he succumbed to the calling of the cryogenic sleep, she was afflicted with confusion.

She could have sworn that the MJOLNIR MARK VI armour the Spartan wore had given off strong readings of rising stress levels from the Spartan's neurological processing organs before it subsided instantaneously right before he mumbled those words. Once again a crease marked her holographic features as she was conflicted with a myriad of emotions.

Her emotions overwrote all her other directives at the moment as she felt compelled to obey what she wanted-no, needed to confront. At that temporary moment of vulnerability, she did not detect a small team of religiously decorated humanoid machines silently entering from the broken part of the Forward Unto Dawn.

"\_What were you thinking John?" \_Cortana's lowered her holographic head. The oceanic blue hologram avatar flickered between an ominous blood red to a lighter blue that reflected her sorrow. \_"You idiotic barbarian!" What? You didn't think that seeing you like that would damage me?" \_From their glowing optical processors, the small squad of seven ancient automatons surveyed the innards of the metal debris, searching for their objectives.

The AI returned her gaze to stare directly at the slumbering Spartan's golden helmet visor, where his eyes were hidden, she enlarged her avatar to match the height of her creator, Doctor Catherine Halsey. Her avatar glowed with a dangerous dark red as anger rose even higher and she screamed at him. \_"HOW DARE YOU! YOU! AN UNWORTHY SIMPLETON, DARE TO CAUSE ME TO FEEL S-SO PAINFUL!"\_ The sound receptors in John's helmet boomed with her voice, the Spartan creased his face as he dreamed of someone shouting at him while for some reason, he was entirely convinced that he was innocent.

The lack of the AI's presence caused the majority of the Forward Unto Dawn's network to remain dormant, as such the group of seven were still searching for any clues of their objectives. Suddenly their sensors picked up heavy frequencies of microwaves, which were heavily

used by the children of their enemies for communication. Heading for the source of the microwaves, it would not be long before they found their objectives.

Regaining her composure, Cortana was shocked that she lost control so suddenly. Realising that her rampancy was approaching faster than expected, she sighed in defeat. By estimation, her lifespan would only last her for another 82 hours before rampancy takes over. Her avatar returned back to an oceanic blue as she looked at the Spartan before her. \_"I'm sorry, Johnâ€|"\_

As she finished with her outburst, she sensed that something was amiss. Returning back to her rounds of patrolling the entire ship, it was not long until she encountered her unexpected guests.

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Overlord Kinesis was intrigued with these new\_ Humans\_, they were so similar to their ancestors. Like the mortal enemies of their creators, the new Humans had a tendency to destroy and conquer. Unlike them however, was the recently discovered unknown faction of Humans. Their culture revolved around isolation and not to conquer, shunning the outside world to protect their own beliefs.

\_\*\*Interestingâ€|\*\*\_

He continued to study them through the eyes of the observer his insufferable underling, Overseer Serenade, had sent. He noted that the technological feats made by this mysterious faction was astounding, dwarfing the UNSC's technological achievements. Their society revolved around what these Humans call, 'Filial Piety' and a population of 13 billion had granted them an impressive army size of 992 million warriors, not taking into account the civilian guardians and the secret societies which were strictly loyal to the leader of the faction. What the new faction had at a disadvantage was that they had an apparent lack of Starships, which were the heavily used ultimate weapons of war and colonisation for the UNSC and the Covenant.

The history of the peculiar Human faction was plagued with strife, desperation and shame. Somewhere in the middle of what the Humans termed as the 22nd century, the United Nations Space Command fought against and defeated the communist and fascists factions in what was known as the 'Inter-Planetary War' throughout the Sol system, the Humans brought death and chaos amongst themselves. Although successful in uniting all the other factions, the price Humanity had paid was tremendous. Parts of the colonial planets were heavily doused with radiation, hundreds of millions had perished in the war and all form of nationalism and culture had almost been extinguished under the oppression of the UNSC government, almost.

What the UNSC had tried to hide was that three decades after the UNSC's Pyrrhic victory in the 'Inter-Planetary War', corruption in many areas were rampant. In a place known to be China, the war had destroyed the Chinese Communist Party and the people were oppressed. The government that the UNSC had created to oversee their country was extremely paranoid, oppressive and corrupt. The Chinese people had lost a quarter of their population in the war, any food produced from the Chinese lands were ceased to feed the rest of the world. The Western powers received the most aid from China as their nations were

extremely dedicated to the UNSC, in turn the Chinese were left to starve. Their country had been humiliated and their pride dissolved. The foreign government was cruel; crime rate was high and the influx of foreigners from the Western world which was meant for 'Promoting harmony amongst the different races' had caused the Chinese people to lose what was left of their culture. The foreigners were also given better rights than the locals, the top positions and occupations were mostly given to the foreigners. Even if a Chinese man or woman had over qualified for the same position, they were ignored unless they managed to bribe their way in. Many of the Chinese people were starving as inflation rose due to the government ceasing most of their crop produce and leaving only meagre amounts for the local population.

The Chinese had lost hope until one man unified the whole of the Chinese population. The man was named Zheng Han Sheng who had hailed from what was used to be Singapore, as a pastor and a nationalist, he revived the hopes of the Chinese people, starting with the small communities in a small area in the province of Guan Dong, Chao Zhou. From there he made a journey, visiting each province and their cities until he made the final destination to Beijing, the capital of China. As he continued his journey, his words soothed the broken pride and honour of the Chinese people and strengthened the resolve to rebuild the glory of China. His fame had blossomed and he was revered by many as the new 'Doctor Sun Yat-Sen'. Dissent for the government had grown and eventually a civil war between the UNSC and the Chinese forces had occurred in streets of Beijing. In response to the threat of the UNSC's control over nations that had similar dissent towards the UNSC and also in fear of the outbreak of the Sino-UNSC civil war to become a catalyst for the other rebellious nations to follow, the UNSC shunned the media from the war and prevented any news of the incident from leaking out. Eventually, the Chinese forces achieved a costly victory and the man that unified China had made a deal with the leaders of the UNSC that China would remain in isolation while the UNSC would cease plans for a second invasion of China, other than that, both nations were free to do whatever they wanted as long as they remained out of each other's matters. In the conclusion of the civil war, Pastor Zheng was known to be the new leader of the Middle Kingdom, Zhong Guo.

Following the events of the war, the Chinese began to rebuild while instilling a completely different economic system in the country. It had taken decades of efforts to do so but eventually, the new Chinese government had managed to create a self-sustaining China with a population of 2 billion Han Chinese by the end of the 22nd century. All of which revolved around the unity of Religion and Science, Han Chinese Culture and profound loyalty to the government. Even till the present day, the political situation in China was extremely fragile as the lone nation depended on a 'Benevolent Dictatorship' for the people to continue to love and support the nation. Due to the peace treaty with the UNSC, China remained isolated and had focused heavily on Science and Culture. By the middle of the 23rd century, they had invented a way to implant data into the memories of people safely, with this discovery, the education system of China skyrocketed and with the peaceful environment the Chinese government had created, the population swelled, leaving the country teeming with a generation of enthusiastic and nationalistic youngsters.

The Chinese government only managed to achieve a loyal and united nation in the present day was by becoming fully transparent and

creating an economy where greed and gluttony were useless in. Religion was no longer a thing of the past as the realisation of hope and the modernisation of religion had encouraged even the scientific community to accept it. By the end of the 23rd century, China had experienced a golden age and become the last remaining nation that is monoreligious, monoethnic and monocultural, which was done after a deal made by the Chinese government and the residing government in Xinjiang province to grant autonomy to the Uyghur people in the Xinjiang province to gain independence and join the UNSC while accepting the rest of the minorities that wanted to leave China. The Chinese government had made secret alliances with the governments in Mongolia, Tibet, Korea and Japan after it had given Tibet and Inner Mongolia autonomy and paying the governments of the nations the Chinese Communist Party had offended with the rest of their UNSC credits they held onto before they recreated their economy. Thus the Chinese had a wide access to the information regarding the Human-Covenant at the present day.

By the end of the 24th century, China had completely restructured the country. 52 percent of the lands of China were covered by dense forests and the Chinese resided in underground cities or in huge domes that dotted the lands, living in harmony with nature. They had achieved a new fuel source and were no longer relying heavily on metal and mineral resources as they had mastered the use of algae oil to produce a carbon compound that could be processed to become refined industrial diamond. They now depended heavily on clean fusion energy and used energy crystals as a means to transport energy, which were 8000 times more effective than the lithium-ion batteries the UNSC had used. The Great Wall of China was rebuilt, which now guarded the entire country. Its surface was imbedded with industrial diamond and a state of the art network system courses through the beautifully decorated wall. Nanite bots dispense stations were located every kilometre of the wall such that when the wall had taken damage, the nanites would automatically replace or repair the damaged portion of the wall. The wall was integrated with an enviable stealth system which was amplified by massive amplifying stations which were located at every 100 kilometre square of area throughout the country. The entire country was shielded from the eyes of outsiders and any means to infiltrate the country was near impossible by UNSC standards.

By 2525 Humanity had encountered the Covenant and China reacted by preparing for a war that never came. They had nearly acted in aiding the UNSC when the Covenant invaded Earth or when the Flood had arrived, but they were stopped when it all ended as sudden as the conflict started on Earth.

Now however, was where it would get interesting, as the Human nature imbedded in the Chinese compels them to explore the stars above when they could only study it from their beloved home, their beloved prison. Adding to that, the need for more heavy metal resources had dragged on for decades. Although they no longer relied heavily on heavy metals, they still needed it for constructing higher end technological instruments.

"\_Hmphâ€| What would you do now, children of China? Would you sacrifice this chance to explore when you could have only envied your enemies for the past hundred years, or would you follow your instincts and claim the justice you crave?" \_ Spoke Overlord Kinesis, his avatar smiled ever so lightly, \_\*\*Fate is a cruel thing is it not? Your ancestors had already foretold the day when Humanity would

spill its own blood once again after the annihilation of the great scourge and this time, there is no escaping \*\*\_\*Their\*\*\_\* arrival.\_\*

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It had been almost a week in Human terms since the Arbiter, Thel' Vandam had seen the blue planet which had been the cradle for Humanity. The peace treaty with the UNSC was a tiring one after the warrior had to battle with his tongue relentlessly to get the annoying Human diplomats to cease their insolent voices.

Heaving a sigh, he knew that peace with the UNSC would be near impossible to maintain if the barbaric Human wretches continued to launch demonstrations after demonstrations for the Covenant Separatists to 'pay for their crimes'. Tensions were already high enough between the Humans and the Sangheili. "And it has not even been two full lunar cycles since these foolish wretches started their childish behaviourâ€|" Rtas' Vadumm spoke behind the Arbiter. Walking towards the troubled Sangheili in his sleek, silver coloured assault power armour, the Special Operations leader spoke, "I know what you are thinking brother, but we must be patient. If the Humans continue to act this way, we shall let them be and do nothing about it." Thel widened his reptilian eyes and turned to face his brother in arms, studying the Sangheili in front of him, the warrior knew that his brother had already thought of a plan. He nodded his head for Rtas to continue. "Rest assured that this is wise, when the humans finally realise we truly mean no harm, they would start to calm down. Surely you have noticed that they act like children, once they start to calm down we show them that we truthful in wanting a lasting peace. That is when the future would brighten."

"Hmphâ€| Perhaps my brother, perhaps. How goes the search for the missing Spartan?" Thel replied after feeling much calmer. The half-jawed Sangheili creased his eye lids, shame crossing his features. Before he could reply, the Arbiter spoke first, "I am aware brotherâ€| do not berate yourself, you have not failed me. Continue searching, I await further news."

"As you command, Arbiter." Rtas spoke with a hint of determination, but his eyes conveyed sorrow. The Arbiter was aware of the consequence of not accepting the Spartan's death, but still, he was a creature of faith.

He was now dressed in traditional Sangheili clothing, the woven silk caressed his battle hardened muscles, providing comfort for the worn out warrior. Looking up from his sleeping chamber, he stared at the holographic display of the stars and recognised the faraway places he had fought at before. His sleepiness called out to him, both mind and body were swayed by the irresistible charm of sleep but before he succumbed to darkness, his gaze never left a certain star system which seemed to call out to him from a place where neither the UNSC or the Covenant had been to before, the \_Song of the Stars \_resonated from where his gaze remained upon, soothing his troubled mind as he finally closed his eyes.

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End

A/N: Thanks for reading, do leave a comment or favourite or follow if you find this worth your time. Also I may need your thoughts on how I have portrayed the massive amount of information in this chapter, were you captivated or did you find yourself skipping out on that information. As always, hope to see you guys in the next chapter, goodbye for now.

End  
file.